DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 122 531 EC 082 909

AUTHOR Cloninger, Leonard
TITLE Our Work-Study Product: Does It Stand Up?
PUB DATE Apr 76
NOTE 20p.; Paper presented at the Annual International Convention, The Council for Exceptional Children (54th, Chicago, Illinois, April 4-9, 1976)

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 HC-$1.67 Plus Postage
DESCRIPTORS Employment; Exceptional Child Research; Followup Studies; Literature Reviews; *Mentally Handicapped; *Program Evaluation; Secondary Education; State Surveys; *Work Study Programs

ABSTRACT

Attempted was an evaluation of work study programs for mentally retarded (MR) students through a followup of work study graduates, a survey of state departments of education, and a review of the literature. Inadequate return of a graduate rating scale, difficulty in obtaining student records, and few and inadequate answers to the state survey resulted in aborting the study. Past studies were surveyed with such findings as a higher success rate for MR graduates of work study programs than MR graduates of other secondary programs. Appended are the list of items used to rate graduates, a summary of studies reporting unemployment of the retarded, a chart of minimum wage rates from 1967 to 1978 (projected), a summary of studies reporting wages earned, a summary of the success percentage of MR graduates, and a chart of the percentage of employment from closure to followup. (DB)

****
* Documents acquired by ERIC include many informal unpublished *
* materials not available from other sources. ERIC makes every effort *
* to obtain the best copy available. Nevertheless, items of marginal *
* reproducibility are often encountered and this affects the quality *
* of the microfiche and hardcopy reproductions ERIC makes available *
* via the ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EDRS). EDRS is not *
* responsible for the quality of the original document. Reproductions *
* supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made from the original. *
****

ED122531

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH,
EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF
EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

Council for Exceptional Children
Chicago, 1976

OUR WORK-STUDY PRODUCT: DOES IT STAND UP?

Leonard Cloninger, Omaha, Nebraska

SESSION LEADER: Andy M. Berg, Jr.
Huntington Beach, California

April 7, 1976

EC082909

OUR WORK-STUDY PRODUCT: DOES IT STAND UP?

Leonard Cloninger

University of Nebraska at Omaha

This paper endeavored to answer the question put forth in the title using a threefold approach dealing with: (1) the work-study student; (2) the state departments of education directors/coordinators; and (3) a review of literature pertinent to the topic. This seemed a viable way to approach the subject, and some answers are forthcoming, but realistically this attempt has also pointed clearly to the fact that an effective and consistent monitoring system of our work-study programs is sorely needed.

A Study Attempt

The object of the original study planned was to gain feedback from work-study products that were graduated from a local Omaha area school district program over the past five years. Work-study was defined as a program for a handicapped client, specifically the mentally retarded, in the spirit of programs discussed in Oliver P. Kolstoe's book, A High School Work-study Program for Mentally Subnormal Youth (1965). Part of the high school program of the handicapped student was spent within this work-study program which included: a training situation in practical work; placement at a work station; and movement on to a job. This experience was coupled with remedial academic work and training in basic social and vocational skills. The term product was defined as meaning the work-study program graduate.

Success, which was our concern, has been measured in various ways. Studies have looked at the amount and length of unemployment, the hourly wage of the product, absence from welfare roles, the amount of time per week worked, total career wages earned, and the quality of life lived. One method found, used sparingly however, was a personal evaluation of success by the employer, the parent, and the graduate himself. Brolin (1975) reported how satisfied the three populations were with the job of the graduate by gathering percentages from each of the populations with regard to job placement and its success. Titus and Travis (1973) reported on the effectiveness of a work-study program as seen by each of the above populations.

The goal of this study was to have been to compare the data of the three populations gathered from a number of questions that conceivably would measure a successful worker. The first step was to modify a list of competencies needed to be occupationally successful. These were taken from Payne's checklist of evaluation items (Payne, Mercer, Epstein, 1974). The list was modified by shortening it and putting it into simpler language to facilitate understanding. (see Table 1) Ratings of the employer, parent, and the graduate were to be compared on each of the twenty items included on the checklist. A Lickert scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being the least desirable and 5 being the most desirable, was to be used. Each item used to rate the graduate was modified only with regard to the noun, depending upon which population was to use the questionnaire. Letters sent by the school district to the graduates of the program explained the procedure requested of the graduate and the employers. As there were only 16 replies after 204 original and 146 follow-up letters were sent, the project was scrapped. This poor return may have been due to a number of causes: the wording of the cover letter for the release form; poor

attitude on the part of the graduates toward the school system and negative past experiences with it; inadequate reading skills; a fear of jeopardizing a good job in an insecure job market; and distrust of an unknown entity seeking such information.

Originally it was hoped a list of work-study graduates from the local school district would be given to the researcher. The intention was to talk with these graduates at their homes and explain to them what the follow-up would entail, and to insure them that no labeling terms like work-study, retarded, or special education would be used. Information was to be compiled from their checklist and permission to see their employed gathered. Parent feedback was to be collected at this time if the graduate still lived at home. Data would then be fed to computers for evaluation.

The Buckley Amendment (The Family Educational Right and Privacy Act, November 19, 1974) was felt to be the major hindrance to this study. This law encourages school districts to evaluate carefully the information they will hand out on their students and to screen those to whom it will be handed. As stated in a pamphlet distributed by the Children's Defense Fund, any school district receiving federal funds may allow only accreditation and research organizations helping the school to see a child's record without consent of the child or parent (Your School Records, 1975). This study was being attempted by an individual and not an organization; therefore, access to information was more tightly controlled. Cover letters were printed on public school stationary, but it was felt that this could not overcome the lack of personal contact.

Although the study was aborted, it is felt useful information was gained from the attempt. Hopefully, people interested in gathering data on work-study programs

may use this information to implement any future studies.

Polling the States

Another way to ascertain the success of work-study programs nationwide would be to seek such information from directors/coordinators of the vocational programs for the handicapped in the fifty states. Letters (see appendix I) were sent to fifty state department contacts listed in Selected Careers Education Programs for the Handicapped (1973). The twelve replies from the state departments were varied. Maine, Missouri, New Hampshire, South Carolina, and Texas responded but were unable to send any information at that time. Connecticut, Minnesota, New Jersey, Virginia, and Wyoming sent reports too general in nature to make any conclusions as to how the handicapped were doing after graduation.

North Carolina sent a form titled Placement of Program Completions in Vocational Education which was the form that state used to submit to the federal government. It reported 105 of the 276 handicapped were employed in their trained or related field. Of the remaining handicapped, 41 were employed elsewhere and nine were continuing their educafion. Thus 155 of the 276 noted were working or furthering their education. This is only 56% of the total. This figure becomes nebulous when one considers the reported 59 in the unknown category. If this population were working, then the percentage would increase to 78. If the remaining 22% were not working, then this was a high figure when considering that a high unemployment figure for the normal population is 10%. However, it is further reported that 34 of 276 (12%) are listed as having had other reasons for not being available for placement and 28 of 276 (10%) were listed as seeking work or being unemployed.

Past Studies

The overview of past studies was limited to follow-up in public school work-study programs and did not include self-contained purely academic secondary special education programs or vocational schools.

Many conclusions have been arrived at by many different means with regard to success by a graduate in competitive employment. The studies looked at from the mid-60's to the present mainly dealt with the unemployment rate as an indicator of success. The range of unemployment for work-study graduates was from 3% (Titus, 1973) to 44% (Brolin, 1975). Titus used an N of 35 while Brolin had an N of 80. Spellman in 1968 reported a range from 14% to 52% of the mentally retarded public school graduates being unemployed. However, this was not dealing specifically with graduates of work-study programs (Chaffin et. al. 1971). Cobb (1972) reviewed the literature on unemployment figures of special education and vocational training programs of the 50's and 60's. He found unemployment ranging from 10% to 38%.

When mentally retarded graduates of work-study programs were compared to mentally retarded graduates of other secondary programs, the results usually showed the work-study programs as being more successful (McPherson and Stephenson 1964; Dearborn, Michigan 1970; Chaffin et. al. 1971; Brolin 1975). Table 2 shows various studies with unemployment figures either stated in the study or surmised from it.

The next highest indicator of success reported in the studies reviewed was that of wages earned. From 1967 to the present the minimum wage has risen from $1.00 per hour to $2.30 per hour. Table 3 shows the rate from 1967 to the present (U.S. Department of Labor).

Information concerning wages earned was consolidated in Table 4 according to individual studies.

In a number of studies success was conceived as a continuum. Dean (Cobb 1972) reported the success of 383 graduates in the Minneapolis school program of the mid-60's in generalized categories. See Table 5.

Doleshall and Jackson (1970) reported on percentage of employment from closure to follow-up. See Table 6.

Brolin (1975) noted the percentage of employment after leaving school. He found 28% were employed 70% or more of the time, 36% were employed less than 30% of the time, and 50% were employed less than 50% of the time.

Absence from the welfare roles was a criteria of success reported only once in the studies reviewed. In this study, Reiter (1967) reported only 20% received welfare payments. This compared to 4-6% of the total population (World Almanac 1975).

Discussion

Each section of the paper was evaluated with regard to its relevance in answering the question put forth in the title. The study attempt, while not answering the question directly, certainly pointed to the fact that studies endeavoring to measure vocational success from a more effective domain should do so through work-study personnel. These people know their graduates and the graduates know them, especially in a stable on-going program. Trust is more likely to occur between these people and the graduate than between the graduate and someone as far removed as a college professor. The role of the professor should be more that of consultant, implementor, and coordinator.

With regard to the section on existing programs, one might wonder about the lack of response. It could be assumed that a plausible explanation for this was little had been done to prove the worth or success of the programs for the handicapped, specifically the mentally retarded. The follow-up that has been done is not very longitudinal; as a rule the criteria for measurement was months rather than years. Perhaps the lack of response was due to the clarity of the communication in the letter of inquiry, or that due to bulk, information was not sent. The obvious might have been merely that this type of information was not available to just anyone or that it was not yet compiled. North Carolina with its reply seemed to be an exception. Here the need for good evaluative techniques for programs was made known.

Review of past literature was somewhat more successful in terms of an answer to our question. This becomes relative, however, to the criteria used in the studies. If an earning power above the minimum wage was accepted as connoting success, then most of the studies reviewed showed successful products. If, on the other hand, the time that the product was employed became the criterion for success, the issue becomes nebulous.

Clearly, work needs to be done in making the work-study idea one which is accepted as being successful. Privacy and educational rights must, of necessity, be considered, but this does not have to inhibit study attempts. Compilation of feedback from existing programs could provide information on the success of work-study graduates. Sex differences as they relate to earning power, comparison of work-study graduates with control groups to determine the product frequency on welfare, formal and informal placement on jobs as criteria to determine success, comparison of the success rate of ethnic groups, and expansion on data gathered

directly from the handicapped individual as Brolin (1975) did and the author intended are only but a few possibilities for analysis.

Basically, the work-study product does stand up to scrutiny in the author's opinion. Perhaps the question to ask now is, at what developmental level is the graduate "standing up"? Is he in his toddering, unsure youth still, in his self-confident erect prime of life, or in his stooping old age?

REFERENCES

Brolin, Donn Vocational Preparation of Retarded Citizens. Columbus, Ohio: Charles E. Merrill Publishing Company, 1976.

Brolin, D., Durand, R., Kramer, K., Mueller, P. Post-School Adjustment of Educable Retarded Students. Education and Training of the Mentally Retarded 1975, 10, 144-149.

Chaffin, J.D., Smith, J.O., and Haring, N.G. A Selected Demonstration for the Vocational Training of Mentally Retarded Youth in Public High Schools. Kansas City, Kansas: University of Kansas Medical Center, 1967, pp. 76.

Chaffin, J.D., Spellman, C.R., Regan, C.E., and Davison, R. Two Follow-up Studies of Former Educable Mentally Retarded Students from the Kansas Work-Study Project. Exceptional Children, 1971, 37, 733-738.

Cobb, Henry V. The Forecast of Fulfillment: A Review of Research on Predictive Assessment of the Adult Retarded for Social and Vocational Adjustment. New York: Teachers College Press, 1972.

Dearborn Public Schools A Follow-up and Comparison of Graduates from Two Types of High School Programs for the Mentally Handicapped. Final Report. Dearborn Public Schools, Michigan Office of Education (DHEW) Washington, D.C., October, 1970.

Doleshol, L.L., Jr., and Jackson, J.L. Evaluation and Follow-up Study of the Texas Cooperative School Program, Rehabilitation Literature. 1970, 31, (9), 268-269.

Howe, C.E. A Comparison of Mentally Retarded High School Students in Work-Study versus Tradition Programs: The Effects of Off-campus Placement. Final Report. Long Beach Unified School District, California. Office of Education (DHEW) Washington, D.C. Bureau of Education for the Handicapped, 1967.

Keeler, K.F.R. Post-School Adjustment of Educable Mentally Retarded Youth Educated in San Francisco. Dissertation Abstracts 1964, 25, (2) 936-37.

Kidd, John Accountability in Public School MR Programs Education and Training of the Mentally Retarded, 1975, 10, (3) 170-173.

Kidd, J.W., Cross, T.J., and Higginbotham, J.L. The World of Work for the Educable Mentally Retarded. Exceptional Children, 1967, 33, (9), 648-649.

References (continued)

Kolstoe, O.P. and Frey, R. A High School Work-study Program for Mentally Subnormal Youth. Carbondale, Illinois: Southern Illinois Press, 1965.

McFall, L.J. Postschool Adjustment: A Survey of Fifty Former Students of Classes for the Educable Mentally Retarded. Exceptional Children, 1966, 32, (9), 633-634.

McPherson, H., and Stephens, T.M. Developing a Work Experience Program for Slow Learning Youth. A Report of a Three-Year Extension and Improvement Project. Ohio Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation, Dayton: Dayton Public Secondary Schools, Ohio, Vocational Rehabilitation of the Mentally Retarded, 1964.

Payne, J.S., Mercer, C.D., Epstein, M.H. Education and Rehabilitation Techniques. New York: Behavioral Publications, 1974.

Polloway, Edward, and Snell, Martha E. Efficacy Revisited. Education and Training of the Mentally Retarded, 1975, 10, (4), 276-282.

Pratt, E.C., and Farr, J.R. A Work-Study Program for Rural Mentally Handicapped Youth. Focus on Exceptional Children, 1969, 1, (5), 6-9.

Reiter, R.A., Follow-up Study of Occupational Education Work-study Program Leavers. Wilmington, Delaware: Public Schools, 1967.

Selected Career Education Programs for the Handicapped U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, Education Division, Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1973.

Shanyfelt, Paul A. Occupational Preparation of Secondary Educable Students. The Pointer, Winter, 1974, 106-110.

Stahlecher, Lotar V. (Ed.) Occupational Information for the Mentally Retarded: Selected Readings. Springfield, Illinois: Charles C. Thomas Publisher, 1967.

Stevens, Harvey A., and Heber, Rich, editors. Mental Retardation: A Review of Research Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1964.

Titus, Robert W., and Travis, John T. Follow-up of EMR Program Graduates. Mental Retardation April, 1973.

Tobias, Jack. Vocational Adjustment of Young Retarded Adults. Mental Retardation, June, 1970, 13-17.

U.S. Department of Labor, Employment Standards Administration. Minimum Wage and Maximum Hours Standards Under the Fair Labor Standards Act, 1975. In Statistical Abstract of the United States: National Data Book and Guide to Sources. U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census. 1975.

Warren, F.G. The Kent Occupational Educational and Training Center, Washington, D.C.: Rehabilitation Services Administration, 1965.

World Almanac and Book of Facts, 1976. New York: Newspapers Enterprise Association, Inc., 1975.

Your School Records: Questions and Answers About A New Set of Rights for Parents and Students. Washington, D.C.: Children's Defense Fund, October, 1975.

TABLE I

ITEMS TO RATE GRADUATES

1. How well do you follow directions?
2. How well do you get along with other workers?
3. How well do you get along with your boss?
4. How well do you work over a long period of time?
5. Are you interested in your job?
6. Do you usually complete your work on time?
7. Are you at work on time?
8. Are you always at work?
9. How clean and neat are you?
10. What kind of person are you?
11. Do you have get up and go?
12. Are you safety conscious?
13. Do you mind your own business?
14. How good is your work?
15. Can you work unsupervised?
16. Are you honest and trustworthy?
17. Do you use tools correctly?
18. How well do you communicate?
19. How well do you count?
20. How well do you write?

TABLE 2

REPORTED UNEMPLOYMENT

Study	Unemployment Percentage
McPherson and Stephens (1964)	11
Warren (1965)	10 and 19
Deno (1965)	27
Kidd (1966)	19
Howe (1967)	15
Chaffin et. al. (1967)	9
Spellman (1968)	14-52
Pratt and Farr (1969)	10
Doleshal and Jackson (1970)	34
Tobias (1970)	40 male, 70 female
Dearborn Public Schools (1970)	11
Titus (1973)	3
Shanyfelt (1974)	18 male, 33 female
Brolin (1975)	44
Kidd (1975)	8

TABLE 3

MINIMUM WAGE RATES

Effective date	Non-farm Workers Pre-1966	Non-farm Workers Post-1966	Farm Workers
February 1967	$1.40	$1.00	$1.00
February 1968	$1.60	$1.15	$1.15
February 1969		$1.30	$1.30
February 1970		$1.45	
February 1971		$1.60	
May 1974	$2.00	$1.90	$1.60
January 1975 (future)	$2.10	$2.00	$1.80
January 1976	$2.30	$2.20	$2.00
January 1977		$2.30	$2.20
January 1978			$2.30

TABLE 4

WAGES EARNED

Study	
Deno (1965)	15% of the males in the study were making over $61/week (@40 hr/week, average/hour would be $1.525). 20% of the females were making over $40/week (@ 40 hr/week, average/hour would be $1.00)
Reiter (1967)	50% of graduates were paid over the minimum wage
Kidd (1967)	48 of 169 graduates working were earning more than $1.50/hour
Titus (1973)	the range of wages reported was from $1.40/hour to $3.45/hour
Shanyfelt (1974)	the graduates earned around the minimum wage
Brolin (1975)	$70/week was reported as the average wage (@40 hours/week, average/hour would be $1.75)

TABLE 5

SUCCESS PERCENTAGE OF MR GRADUATES

	Male	Female	Both
Very successful	15	20	17
Intermediate	66	58	63
Very unsuccessful	19	22	20
	100	100	100

TABLE 6

PERCENTAGE OF EMPLOYMENT FROM CLOSURE TO FOLLOW-UP

Percentage of Time Employed	Clients Number	Employed Percent
01-19	7	3.7
20-39	16	8.0
40-59	14	7.0
60-79	13	6.5
80-99	18	9.0
100	131	65.8
TOTALS	199	100.0

$\bar{X} = 82.7$

APPENDIX I

The University of Nebraska at Omaha
Box 688 Omaha, Nebraska 68101 402/554-2201

College of Education
Department of Special Education

November 24, 1975

Dear Director:

My interest is in the follow up of vocational program graduates. If you have any data on what the graduates of your program are doing now and how well they are doing in their jobs and living their lives, would you please send me a copy of it.

I hope to digest the data I get back, compare it with follow up studies in the literature, and then make a conclusion on how successful vocational programs (vocational education, career education, work study programs) are for the handicapped.

I am looking forward to hearing from you. Thank you in advance.

Sincerely,

Leonard Cloninger, Ed.D.
Assistant Professor